Postcards from Google Earth
Screenshots from Google Earth, postcards and postcard racks, inkjet on paper, website
2010–ongoing

Postcards from Google Earth is a collection of images found inside Google Earth: bridges that melt into the river below, highways that drape over hillsides like fabric, terrain that folds in on itself.

These are not glitches in the sense of errors. They are the direct result of how the system works. Google Earth stretches a single continuous photographic surface over a 3D model of the terrain. The model knows about mountains and valleys. It does not know about bridges, overpasses, or anything else that stands away from the ground, so the photograph of a bridge gets pulled down onto the landscape underneath it.

The images are not manipulated. They are screenshots. What they record is an automated system doing exactly what it was designed to do and producing pictures nobody intended.

I collect them, print them, and put them on postcard racks, which is the format that has always been used to sell a place back to the people standing in it.







POSTCARDS FROM GOOGLE EARTH

INFO













POSTCARDS FROM GOOGLE EARTH

46.95664°,7.3002872°



Date of Satellite or Aerial Photos: **2018-02-13**
Date of Screenshot : **2019-01-23**



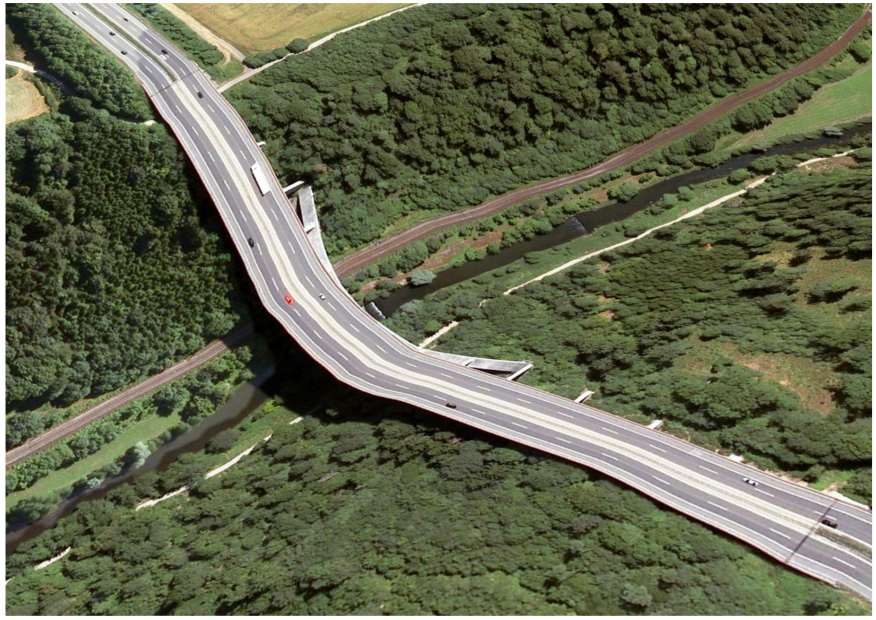
POSTCARDS FROM GOOGLE EARTH **33.544765°,-86.642815°**



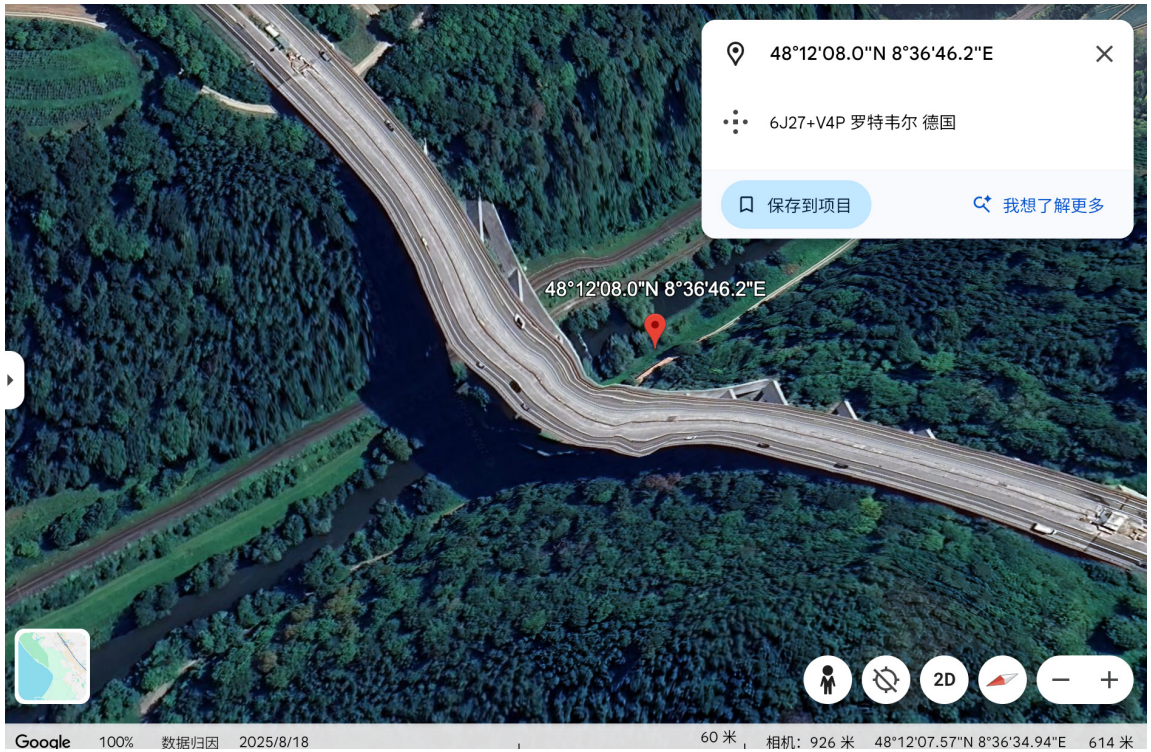
Date of Satellite or Aerial Photos: **2013-02-06**
Date of Screenshot : **2019-01-23**



POSTCARDS FROM GOOGLE EARTH **48.202225°,8.612829°**



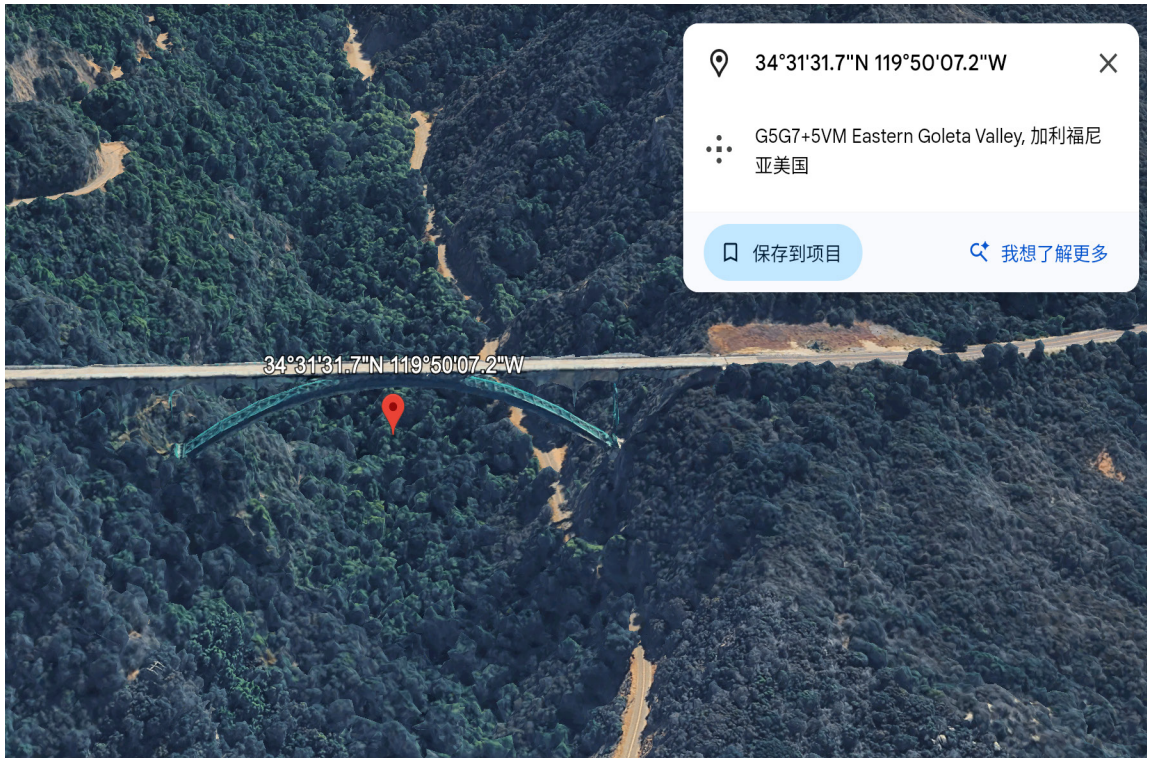
Date of Satellite or Aerial Photos: **2010-12-31**
Date of Screenshot : **2019-01-23**



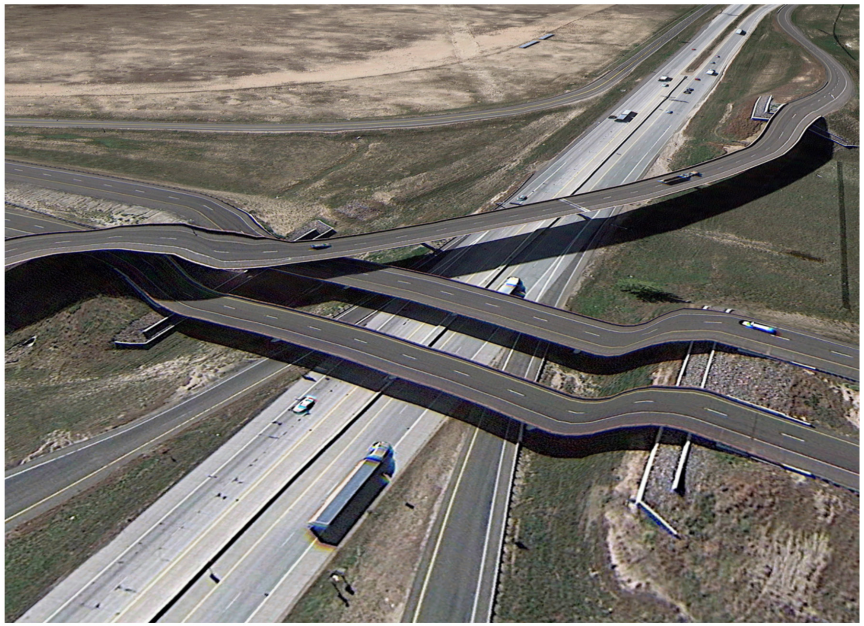
POSTCARDS FROM GOOGLE EARTH **34.52546°,-119.83533°**



Date of Satellite or Aerial Photos: **2018-02-04**
Date of Screenshot : **2019-01-23**



POSTCARDS FROM GOOGLE EARTH **39.740177°,-104.7188°**



Date of Satellite or Aerial Photos: **2014-10-07**
Date of Screenshot : **2019-01-23**



POSTCARDS FROM GOOGLE EARTH **39.775124°,-105.14428°**



Date of Satellite or Aerial Photos: **2011-05-05**
Date of Screenshot : **2019-01-23**



POSTCARDS FROM GOOGLE EARTH **39.76929°,-105.199°**



Date of Satellite or Aerial Photos:
Date of Screenshot : **2019-01-23**



POSTCARDS FROM GOOGLE EARTH **39.761364°,-105.22359°**



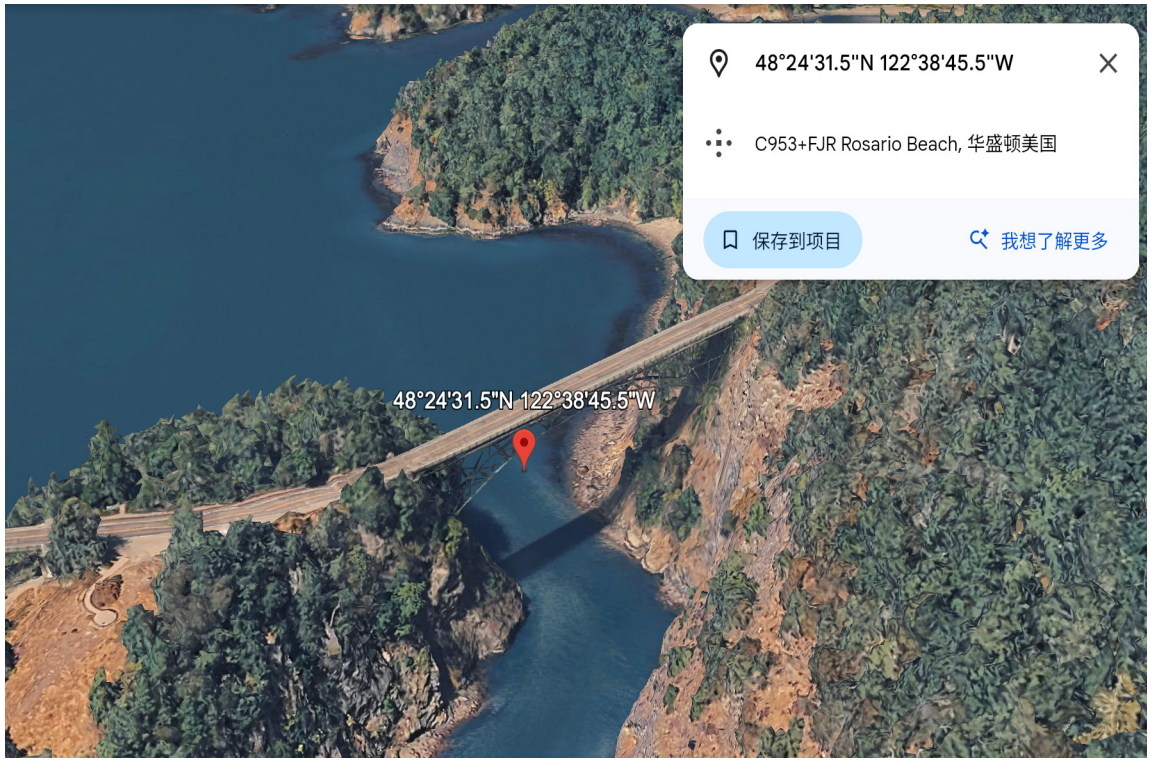
Date of Satellite or Aerial Photos: **2014-10-07**
Date of Screenshot : **2019-01-23**



POSTCARDS FROM GOOGLE EARTH **48.408737°,-122.64598°**



Date of Satellite or Aerial Photos: **2007-05-27**
Date of Screenshot : **2019-01-23**



POSTCARDS FROM GOOGLE EARTH

INFO













修改 查看 添加 工具 帮助

Central Saint Martins, Granary Sc



数据归因 2024/4/13 6 米 相机：57 米 51°32'05.28"N C

1. What unexpected outputs did you encounter?

During the copying process, I found that many images in the original seem to use image data from 2008 to 2018, and the screenshot date of Valla is January 23, 2019. When I revisit the same location in Google Earth now, I find that many original visual anomalies have disappeared or changed.In addition, when I explored Google Earth by myself, I found it difficult to find scenes similar to the images collected by Valla. The abnormalities I have encountered are more common in trees, outdoor steps and building surfaces, especially the unnatural misalignment between the map and the shape of the object. Unexpectedly, not only the abnormal images will disappear, but also the types of anomalies I found when I explored, which are not exactly the same as the images finally collected by Valla.

2. How has your understanding of the tool or medium changed?

At first, I mainly regarded Google Earth as a tool for observing and exploring geographical space. But by copying Valla's project, I began to realize that what we see is not unprocessed reality, but visual presentation generated through processes such as data acquisition, image processing and three-dimensional modeling.These anomalies made me begin to pay attention to the relationship between digital images and the reality they present. Images are not fixed: some data may reflect a period of history. As the data and system are updated, a certain visual state may change and may not even reappear.Therefore, I began to understand Google Earth as a medium that can generate specific visual results and is also limited by its own technical conditions. I also began to pay attention to the meaning of screenshots and files: they not only save images, but also save a digital state that may not be generated again.

3. Did it present any particular technical challenges?

I find it difficult to find images that are unusually similar to those collected by Valla through my own exploration. At present, I don't know exactly what search strategy he used, how he systematically found these locations, and how his investigation process was carried out. In the materials I have consulted so far, I have not found enough detailed information to restore his complete research method.Another technical problem is that I don't fully understand how Google Earth combines geographic data, images, and three-dimensional models, and why these processes produce anomalies on specific objects. At the same time, some abnormalities in the original work have disappeared in the current version, so that I can't simply repeat the original observation results. This means that I not only need to find the image, but also record the location, image date and visit time, and compare the historical screenshot with the current screen.

4. What kinds of outputs or knowledge does the tool privilege?

Google Earth transforms complex geographic information into continuous visual surfaces, enabling people to understand and explore space through images. But in my observation, its visual presentation seems to be easier to identify buildings, protruding structures on the ground and relatively simple geometric blocks, while the maps of trees, steps and objects on the surface may be distorted or misaligned.This makes me think about whether the images generated by the tool will affect the way we understand reality. The space we see seems to be coherent and complete, but this visual continuity may cover up the data source, generation process and technical limitations behind the image.At present, I have not fully figured out how these images are generated, so I don't want to directly assert that an anomaly must be caused by a specific algorithm. I hope to further understand the relationship between these visual results and the way the tools work through subsequent observation and comparison.

5. What is the relationship between the tool or medium and graphic/communication design?

I think that by exploring the anomalies in the existing digital system, Valla's project proposes an experimental method to study how digital images present reality and how these images reveal the limitations of the system itself.These anomalies are not only the result of technical processing, but also provide another perspective for us to observe digital reality. They expose the data and modeling process behind the seemingly objective and continuous geographical images.At the same time, Valla converts short digital images into visual records that can be saved, compared and disseminated through screenshots, postcards and image collection. This made me think about whether graphics and communication design can not only organize and convey information, but also make digital images that are easy to disappear gain new meanings through recording, classification and display.For me, the direction worth continuing to explore this project is how the disappearance of digital images changes its meaning, and how screenshots and archives can save a digital state that could not exist stably and make it an object that can be watched and discussed.